United Nations E/2014/NGO/12

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
7 May 2014

Original: English

2014 session
Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda*
High-level segment: annual ministerial review

Statement submitted by Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

14-32490 (E) 160514

Please recycle

Statement

We, the representatives of civil society, academia, policymakers and individuals participating in the International Conference organized in Doha, on 16 and 17 April 2014 by the Doha International Family Institute, member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family,

Having considered the conference theme "Empowering Families: A Pathway to Development",

Reaffirming that the family is not only the fundamental group unit of society but is also the fundamental agent for sustainable, social, economic and cultural development,

Stressing the importance of designing, implementing and monitoring family-oriented policies, especially in the areas of poverty eradication, full employment and decent work, work-family balance and social integration and intergenerational solidarity,

Emphasizing that the achievement of development goals especially those relating to the eradication of poverty, education of children, especially girls, and reduction in maternal mortality depends, to a significant extent, on how families are empowered to fulfil their numerous functions,

Emphasizing further that strategic focus on families offers a comprehensive approach to solving some of the persistent development challenges, such as inequality and social exclusion,

Call upon Governments to empower and enable families to contribute to development by taking the following actions:

1. Develop comprehensive and coherent policies, integrate a cross-sectoral approach to support family stability and establish/strengthen a national mechanism to develop family-oriented policies and programmes and allocate adequate human and financial resources to implement, monitor and evaluate them.

2. Promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, reform discriminatory laws and policies, particularly family laws, and enact legislation to end child marriage and violence against women.

3. Recognize the contribution and responsibility of men to families, develop policies to address the impact of the absence of males/fathers on family well-being and promote active fatherhood.

4. Focus poverty alleviation strategies on the family as a unit and acknowledge that family breakdown can be both a root cause and an effect of poverty and its prevention is a priority.

5. Adopt policies to ensure work-family balance, so that the responsibilities of parenting and maintaining families do not fall primarily on women and collaborate with the private sector to protect and support workers with family responsibilities.

6. Value important contributions of all generations within the family, design and implement policies to strengthen intergenerational solidarity and partnerships and promote healthy intrafamily relations.

7. Ensure the systematic collection of data and statistics on family well-being and collaborate on good practice exchange at the national, regional and international levels.

8. Develop and implement family-focused policies and interventions to strengthen and support families in vulnerable situations (such as conflict, natural disasters and health epidemics, including HIV/AIDS and malaria).

9. Create an enabling environment for a meaningful contribution of civil society organizations in the design, implementation and monitoring of family policies and programmes and remove barriers to the establishment, work and funding of non-governmental organizations.

10. Acknowledge that families are at the centre of sustainable development and ensure that families are an integral part of the post-2015 development agenda.